

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. Please cancel original claims 1-6, and add new claims 7-16 as follows:

Claims 1-6. (Cancelled)

7. (New) A process for laser welding two coated plates, which are positioned closely contacting each other, wherein:

during a first process step the plate facing the laser beam is warmed with the laser beam in such a manner

- that the coating of both plates on their sides facing each other is evaporated, leaving a de-coated area, and

- that no plate is completely melted through, and

during a second process step the two plates are welded along the de-coated area,

wherein both process steps are carried out by the same laser beam with substantially the same output and focusing, however, the second process step is carried out with reduced speed of advance of the laser over the surface.

8. (New) The process according to Claim 7, wherein the laser beam is guided on the surface via a scanner device.

9. (New) The process according to Claim 7, wherein the laser beam is focused in such a manner that its focus is from 0 and 50 mm from the surface of the laser beam facing plate.

10. (New) The process according to Claim 7, wherein the laser beam is focused in such a manner that its focus is approximately 20 mm from the surface of the laser beam facing plate.

11. (New) The process according to Claim 7, wherein the laser beam is moved along a main direction of advance to form a seam, and wherein said laser beam is guided during the second process step in such a manner that a transverse movement component is superimposed upon the main direction of advance (so-called beam spinning).

12. (New) The process according to Claim 7, wherein the laser beam is moved along a main direction of advance to form a seam, and wherein said laser beam is guided during the second process step in such a manner that a transverse movement component is superimposed upon the main direction of advance to produce beam spinning.

13. (New) The process according to Claim 7, wherein the first and second process steps occur alternately in the form of a step seam.

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14. (New) The process according to Claim 7, wherein no plate melts during the first process step.

15. (New) The process according to Claim 7, wherein said plates are metal plates.

16. (New) The process according to Claim 7, wherein said plates are plastic plates.